[illegible] and Lamentable News 53

FROM

Northampton,

OR,

A full and true Relation of the late great

FIRE:

Whereby the far greater part of that Antient and Eminent Corporation is destroyed: There being the Great Church of St. *All-Hallows* and two other Parish Churches, the Market-place, and most part of the chief Streets in the Town burnt down and consumed.

On *Monday* the 20th of this instant *September*, 1675.

With Allowance.

Printed in the Year 1675.

Northampton.

OR

A full and true Relation of the late great

FIRE:

Printed in the Year 1675.

An Account of the late great *Fire* at *Northampton.*

NORTHAMPTON (ſcituate near the very centre) or middle of *England*, and about threeſcore miles from *London*) was a Town inferior to few Inland places throughout the *Nation* for the ſweetneſs of air, The gallant Champaigne Country ſurrounding it, The number of Gentry living in or near it, and reſorting to it, togeather with the ſeveral great roads lying through it, as to *Weſtchester*, *Nottingham*, moſt part of *Yorkſhire* &c. ſeemd all to conſpire to render it a place of conſiderable Trade and Importance.

But places as well as men have their critticall times and ſeaſons of viſitation: *Troy*, *Nineve* and *Carthage* once the famouſt Cities of the univerſe have now nothing but paper walls to preſerve their memories, This eminent Town but the other day ſild with numerous Inhabitants and flouriſheth with plenty and opulency within leſſe then the compaſſe of halfe a day is for the moſt part reduced to aſhes, It's ſtately ſtructures become heaps of rubbiſh, and it's magnificent

 building

ſacred and civil buried in their own ruins by a ſudden and unexpected cataſtrophe.

So fleeting tranſitory and uncertaine are all worldly Enjoyments that can promiſe no certaine continuance to themſelves, or laſting felicity to their poſſeſſors.

The beginning or original cauſe of this deplorable diſaſter as in all other ſuch ſudden great and ſurpriſing Accidents is variouſly reported, but the moſt approved opinion of perſons beſt informed agrees, That it began in a poore womans houſe in manner following.

On munday the 10. of this inſtant ſeptember this woman being to waſh ſome clothes got ſome ſtraw to heat her water (wood and all ſort of fewel being there alwayes extraordinary deare and ſcarce to be got) and having kindled too great a wiſpe thereof, with the ſudden blaze it ſet her chimney on fire, and ſoe the ſparke put all the roof of her tenement which was only covered with thatch in a flame.

It was then about one or two of the clock in the afternoon, and being at ſuch a time in the open day when all people were abroad and ready to helpe and the Town being generally built of ſtone, not lyable to catch the combuſtion ſo faſt as wooden yet on the other ſide if it be conſidered, how violent the wind was which blew very high and hard all that day, and how in ſight it did ſet to caſt the flames upon the whole body of the towne, how great an increaſe the fire preſently got by ſeizing upon ſeverall ricks or ſtacks of hay and corn, how ſad an aſtoniſhment the poore affrighted people were in, and that they wanted the benefit of engines, and the skill or perhaps or the convenience at leaſt to put in practiſe the remedy of

 blowing

blowing up houses &c. we cannot but apprehend dreadfull consequences, and conclude that there was sufficient cause for this sad devastation that now sorrowfully behold.

Thus fleeting transitory and uncertaine are all worldly enjoyments not only particular men being lyable by various accidents to be stript of their wealth, but whole towns obnoxious to the same fate, and in a moment reduced to Ashes.

For this raging fire in spight and defiance of all resistance went on and being driven forwards and spread by the impetuosity of the wind which in a very small space veer'd to several points of the Compass, It seised upon the very heart of the Town, burnt down the most most part of the High street consumed the market place (which was a very goodly one) and what is yet more destroyed the stately church of St. Allhallowes and two other parish Churches. So that there is now but one Church left for the people to assemble in, to worship God in the whole Town.

There was scarce any place in *England* could boast of so many large and fair Inns, or so well furnished for the accommodation of Travellers, but now they are generally destroyed, together with most part of their Goods and Provision of Hay, Provinder and Corn, to a mighty value. This disaster being so much the more unhappy and Calamitous, in that it fell out just after Harvest, when most people had laid up and furnisht themselves with their Winter store, which now being thus suddenly destroyed, they are forced, (poor soules) very many of them to seek Bread for themselves and Families, and cannot but under such circumstances, be exposed to very sad and pressing necessities.

In brief, its modesty computed by the most observing persons, that three parts in four of the said Town of *Northampton*, are ruined and consumed

consumed, there being only the Skirts or Suburbs left standing. And all this mischief done between one or two of the Clock in the Afternoon and nine or ten at Night (for about that time the Fire was stopt and mastered.)

The particular losses or total Damages cannot yet be computed to any degree of exactness. But in general, we cannot but conceive that the same are very vast and considerable. For the Calamity coming so suddenly and fast upon them, few of the distressed Inhabitants had time or opportunity to get away their Goods, and several having made shift to remove their things into the Streets, the Fire came on with such violence, that it seized and burned them there, before they could carry them any farther.

To go about to represent the dismal confusions of such a terrible Visitation, were to suspect the Readers Christian compassion, which cannot of it self but sympathize with the ruinated Sufferers, without being moved thereunto by a Rhetorical description; and besides, is needless to those that have seen *London* in Flames, and by their own disasters (as well as common Charity) have been taught to comiserate those of their Brethren.

Let this fresh Example rather warn all persons whether in City or Country, not to trust in uncertain Riches, much less to violate the Laws of God, or injure their Neighbours, to obtain them by indirect courses.

To go about to make any studied pathetical description of the Horrors, the Frights, the Amazements, Confusions, Cries and Lamentations of the distressed Inhabitants in this miserable Juncture, would be to suspect the Readers Christian Charity, as if the bare Relation of such a calamitous Accident could not raise their sympathizing Griefs to the highest Key without expecting to have their affections moved with

with the doleful Notes of Rhetorick: Those that have seen *London* in ashes will find in themselves more lively Ideas, if these poor distressolute Souls Condition than any I can express, and know how from their own Experience, as well as good nature, to commiserate their Brethren.

But naked pity is but a helpless salve for misery. Let us improve it by Charity and all the good Offices of Love to the Sufferers, and to our selves by taking warning from this fresh accident (or rather Providence) not to trust in uncertain Riches, nor to set up our rest in Earthly Tabernacles, much less to violate the Laws of God, or injure our Neighbours to obtain them by indirect courses, since we see, that in one moment we may be stript of them all, and then nothing will remain to us but the sin of having got them unlawfully. And for those immediately concernd, learn from thence, to lie low under the Visitation of God, acknowledging him to be *holy in all his works, and righteous in all his Judgments.* What though God hath taken away your houses and goods by Fire? Is it not an unspeakable mercy that your Souls are still on this side the fire of Hell; 'Tis his mercy that your selves were not likewise consumed; Leave off your childish whining for these earthly trifles, and settle your affections on things above, strive for those glorious eternal Mansions not made with hands prepared by the Father for all that love and obey him; Learn to know and prize that *one thing necessary*: It is not necessary that I should be rich, but it is necessary that I should be holy, if ever I would be lastingly happy. 'Tis not necessary I should enjoy a pleasurable life in this world, but it is absolutely necessary that I should make God my portion and obtain an assurance of his love, if I would not be eternally miserably in the next. What though I am houseless, my Saviour had not whereon to lay his head? What though I am meanly clad, if I am not Graceless and Christless, 'tis no great matter.

Let Sins, thoughts, and Cogitations, I say, or these rest upon their hearts, and support their drooping Spirits, so may this Loss prove their infinite Gain, and the Burning of their Houses be an Instrumental occasion to preserve their Souls from everlasting Burnings, and

then

then how joyfully will they reflect upon that which now they count matter of Grief, when they shall experience that never failing Promise of that Holy One, *That all things shall work together for Good to them that fear him.*

The particular lesser or total damage cannot at least as yet be computed to any degree of Exactness only in general we may conclude them to be very vast and considerable, and such as cannot but influence much further than the flames were seen, not a few as it's feared in this City sufferers in the meantime of them Customers and Correspondents there for Expence sake suddenly remove but not time to remove their Goods but into the street where flakes of fire carried to a great distance by the impetuosity of the wind seised them and consumed them before they could be carried further.

FINIS.

44944